The Monster's Keeper

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/23269906.

Rating:	Not Rated
Archive Warning:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationships:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter, Matthew Brown/Will Graham
Characters:	Will Graham, Will Graham's Father, Hannibal Lecter, Matthew Brown (Hannibal), Wendigo (Hannibal), Beverly Katz, Brian Zeller, Original Male Character(s), Alana Bloom
Additional Tags:	Wendigo Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham Has Nightmares, Young Will Graham, Teen Will Graham, will is 17, Possessive Hannibal Lecter, Protective Hannibal Lecter, Mild Gore, Canon-Typical Violence, Other Additional Tags to Be Added, Alcohol, Attempted Sexual Assault
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2020-03-23 Updated: 2020-08-15 Words: 13,423 Chapters: 9/?

The Monster's Keeper

by dulcetliyah

Summary

Will is Hannibal's keeper. He has no idea what's in store for him.

One

Allen Graham discovered that his son was a keeper before his son did. Will was spending the night with one of his friends from school, Allen couldn't put a name to the guy's face at the moment. Allen, on the contrary, was dozing off on his ragged sofa, having drunk himself to tiredness. He was lucid enough, however, to discern the scrape of something against glass over the chattering from the television. The sound was shrill and intentional, nothing contingent could have caused that. It lasted for a couple of moments before it abruptly came to a stop. Allen sat up immediately, mind slightly clearing. He reached for the remote and turned off the television, listening for any other sounds in the house. He didn't hear anything else, but still had the sense to lumber into the kitchen for a knife.

The lights in the kitchen were off, which offered him insurance as he grabbed the sharpest knife from the counter. He gripped the knife tightly, warming up to the feeling of it in his hand as he walked toward the steps. The sound had to have come from upstairs, it hadn't seemed close to him. He climbed the stairs, driven by his liquid courage from earlier that was now having an effect. Before he made it even halfway up the staircase, he was halted mid-step by a sound. It came from outside in the backyard, and it sounded like something had landed on the ground. Allen retreated from the steps and moved quickly through the kitchen and to the back door. Without hesitation, Allen unlocked and swung the door open. It connected with the wall and created a loud 'bang'. That drew the attention of the terrifying creature crouched in the yard, only feet away from him. Allen stood still, as the creature's white eyes tracked him. The creature, consummated with ink black skin, a massive pair of antlers, and long talons - stood to full height. Then, with inhumane speed, the creature disappeared into the treeline. Allen absentmindedly stepped outside and looked at the treeline uneasily and then studied the side of the house. The window to Will's room was open.

Allen cursed and ran through the back door, sending it crashing shut behind him as he ran up the stairs. He dropped the knife in the hall and bursted into Will's room, a wave of coldness passing over him from the open window. He closed the window with clammy hands, breath caught in his throat. When he turned from the window, he saw something that made him thoroughly sober up. Placed neatly on Will's pillow was, unmistakably, a heart. He moved closer and tried to brush this off as a side effect of his drinking, he had to be imagining things. He stared at the visibly fresh heart for so long, and it did not go away. This was real. He wasn't imagining things. He didn't know what was going on. What Allen Graham did know, however, was that this was not the heart of any animal.

-

cue sexy music

Will swung his leg over Matthew's thighs, settling himself onto his lap with a sultry grin. He bit his lip, staring into Matthew's eager eyes. Will leaned in and pressed his lips to Matthew's waiting ones, eyes falling closed. Matthew responded instantly, kissing him back firmly. His fingers tangled in Will's curls and his other hand slid up his leg and around to grip his ass. Will pulled away to gasp out a moan, and then returned to the kiss hungrily. He brought his

hands up to Matthew's shoulder, grabbing them firmly and pressing him against the headboard. Their lips parted immediately when Will's phone buzzed from his back pocket. Matthew handily reached into his pocket for him and offered it to him with a cheeky smile. Will returned his smile and licked his red lips, looking down at his phone. His dad's number was across the screen and Will hushed Matthew before accepting the call.

"Hello?" Will playfully shoves Matthew away as he attempts to kiss his neck and climbs off of him. He sits against the headboard beside Matt, who loops an arm around him.

His dad's deep voice comes through the speaker,"Hey, bud, what are ya up to?" He asks, surprisingly warm and very unlike him. Will tilts his head and shoots Matt a confused look before responding,

"Nothing. Are you okay? Is something wrong?" He asks slowly and his dad clears his throat from the other end of the line.

"No, everything's fine. I just wanted to ask if ya wanted to stay the night with your friend?" Will's father is being very liberal, and Will just passes it off as him being in a good mood from drinking. If something was wrong, his father would have told him, right?

Will smiles to himself, shifting closer to Matt,"Uh, yeah, dad, I'll stay." He agrees, and Matt nudges him teasingly.

His dad probably doesn't realize that it's midnight. Will was going to stay the night there anyways. But it didn't hurt to have unprompted permission.

"Alright, son, I'll see ya tomorrow." Allen says with a sigh and Will responds with a short 'bye', before ending the call. Will throws his phone to the end of the bed and leans his head onto Matt's bare chest.

"You good?" Matt asks, leaning down to look at him and stroking his shoulder tenderly. Will looks back up at him briefly and nods,

"Yeah, dad was acting a little strange. He's probably been drinking." Will shakes his head, pulling the comforter over his body. Matt nods in understanding and asks him softly,

"Wanna sleep?"

He mumbles a quiet 'yes' and is already dozing off against the warmth of the other guy's body.

-

Allen wipes his brow and steps away from the newly dug hole in the ground. He throws down the shovel into the grass and returns into the house with apprehensive steps. He goes to Will's room and looks warily at the sinister heart. He looks away as he picks it up and places the heart into a bag. He tries not to think about the feeling of the organ in his hand. He then strips Will's stained pillowcase off of his also stained pillow and throws both of the items into the washer along with a massive amount of detergent and bleach. He ties the bag and makes

his way back downstairs and to the backyard. He tosses the bag into the hole with a breath of relief and reaches for the shovel he discarded earlier. He would have taken the heart to a different place, would have put it in some back alley dumpster - but Will had taken the truck. He places one shovelful of dirt back into the hole before he is slammed against the side of the house swiftly. The shovel falls to the ground. The creature from before has him by the throat and it looks pissed. It's claws sink into his throat for a moment, before it releases him. Allen winces, running shaking fingers over the shallow wound. The creature moves over to the hole and snatches the bag from out of it. He tears it open and removes the heart, seeming to study it with a displeased look. It brings the heart to it's nose and smells it and it lets out a wrathful growl. Allen doesn't expect it to speak, but he freezes when it does,

It's voice was guttural and chilling,"This was meant for my keeper, and now you have gone and spoiled it." The creature pins him with a predatory look but doesn't go to tear his throat out like Allen expects it to. Instead, the creature turns without a word and disappears into the forest, black talons wrapped around the heart. Allen passes out on the dirt and his last, horrifying thought is that this creature meant for that heart to be some sort of sick gift for Will.

Two

Chapter Summary

Will has his first encounter with Hannibal, through a nightmare.

“Matt.” Will calls to the other male across the room, as he tugs his t-shirt over his head wearily.

He sighs when he gets no response from Matt, whose face is buried in his pillow as he sleeps on without disturbance. Will gets on to the bed and crawls over to Matt.

He places his hand on Matt’s bare shoulder, leaning down to his ear,”Matthew, get up.” He says, shaking the other lightly.

It takes a few more moments of shaking before Matthew finally opens his eyes. Will gives him a second to adjust before he cups his face and says,”I gotta go.”

Matthew raises his bleary eyes to him and frowns, pushing himself to sit up on the bed.

He sighs, and puts his hand on Will’s knee,”I’ll walk you out.”

Will nods with a smile and gets off the bed. He finds his shoes that had been cast away at different spots in the room last night, and slides them on. Matthew throws the comforter to the side and stands up, stretching. He leisurely slips on his own shirt and then picks up Will’s jacket from the floor. He walks over to Will and hands him his jacket, waiting for him to slip his phone into his back pocket. He then takes his hand and they walk downstairs, Will leaning against him the whole time. The warm morning air grazes over them as they walk down the concrete and to the truck. Will unlocks the car and turns to Matthew with a sheepish smile. Matthew pulls him in for a chaste, but loving kiss. Will returns the kiss, hand resting on Matt’s chest. They pull apart and Will reluctantly opens the door and gets into the truck with a sigh. Matthew gives him one last parting kiss, before shutting the door for him and stepping away. Will waves at him before he starts the car and pulls out of the driveway.

-

Will unlocks the front door and steps inside, just wanting to go to his room and sleep. He is greeted by his father sitting on the couch, not even passed out on it as per usual - just sitting. Will gives him an unnecessarily weird look, hesitantly stepping further inside the house and closing the door with a quiet click. His dad looks up at him and Will catches sight of the bandage on the side of his father’s neck.

His dad is about to speak but Will interrupts him promptly,”Are you okay? What happened to your neck?” He fires questions at his father who shakes his head in dismissal, raising his

hand up,

”I’m fine, son, it’s just a nick from shavin’.” He laughs it off and Will still fixes him with a weird look, not letting up.

Will studies his father’s face dubiously. It’s no wonder Allen cut himself, his beard looks rushedly shaved - there are even parts that haven’t even been touched by a razor. Will narrows his eyes and his father gives him a tight-lipped smile, eyes shifty. He was most definitely drinking when he did this. Will is too tired for this, he can’t deal with his father’s antics right now.

“Okay, dad, whatever. Just be careful and maybe cut back on the alcohol the next time you’re shaving.” Will says, blunt and insulting - even more than he meant it to be. He doesn’t take it back though because he doesn’t care.

He blames his irritability on his sleepiness and trudges up the stairs after tossing the keys on to the sofa, turning away from his father’s astonished expression. Will goes into his room and crumples on to his bed, eyes getting heavy instantly. He lays his head on his pillow, and is too far gone to notice the clean smell of it.

-

Will is jerked from his sleep when his bedroom door opens and his dad calls his name. He turns over and looks at his dad with a drowsy look, barely processing what he is saying with his muddled mind.

“I have to go to work.” His dad says, and his tone is strangely dismal. Will nods sluggishly and rests his head back against his pillow, waiting for the door to shut. But it never does. Instead, he hears footsteps rounding his bed. The footsteps stop in front of him and he cracks open one eye exasperatedly, looking up at his dad expectantly.

His dad crosses his arms,”Ya should invite that boy over. Have someone to keep ya company.” Will’s eyebrows raise as he perches up on one arm with a sudden burst of energy from his curiosity.

“You want me to invite Matthew over?” He clarifies with a frown, and his dad jumps to give an explanation,

”Just so ya don’t feel lonely when I’m at the shop.” He shrugs, stuffing his hands into his jump suit pockets. Will examines his father’s face for any signs of a joke, but his dad just stares back at him.

“Okay.” Will says, pulling his phone from under his pillow to message Matthew. His dad nods and watches him type out the quick message until Will looks back up to him.

Allen glances at his watch,”I gotta go, bud.” He looks at Will for an extra beat, and it looks like he’s about to say something else - but he stops himself.

“Bye, dad.” Will mumbles, masking the unsureness of his dad’s behavior in his tone.

Allen leaves the room. His dad has been acting so strange recently, but Will has no idea what could be happening. However, he's not being strange in a necessarily bad way. Will is snapped from his reverie as his phone buzzes - it's a message from Matthew.

'I'll be there in a little babe'

Will smiles to himself and messages back a heart.

-

While waiting for Matthew to arrive, Will unintentionally dozes off. He is lying on his back, arms resting by his side. He sleeps for what feels like a couple of minutes, and then he opens his eyes. His vision is slightly blurred and he recognizes that something isn't right. The room seems to have gotten dimmer, despite it being noon when he went to sleep. He tries to move, but his body doesn't cooperate with his mind. His heart begins to beat faster, and he can only manage tiny and unfulfilling breaths. His eyes move frantically where his body can't. His room looks normal, it's just dark because of the lack of light from the window. The window. Will doesn't know why, but his eyes are drawn to the window. The longer he looks at the window, the more clearly he is able to see a shape behind it. The only thing he can tell about the shape is that it has antlers. The first thing that comes to mind is a deer, but then what looks like a hand comes up to rest against the window. It's not a normal hand, it has sharp claws in the place of fingers. Will begins to tremble and closes his eyes tightly, his body becoming hot from the feeling of restriction. The sound of the doorbell downstairs is what saves him. As it resonates through the house, Will is freed from his invisible restraints. He opens his eyes and the light has returned to his room. Sun streams through the window, and the figure is gone.

Will is afraid to move, even though he wanted to so badly when he couldn't. He lays there and tries to regulate his breathing. Once his breathing is slightly less erratic, he sits up and swings his legs out of the bed. He tries to ignore the fright that is still gripping him as he goes to the front door on shaky legs. He hesitates minutely before opening the door. He is comprehensively frightened that he will see an antlered, clawed figure when he opens the door. When he sees Matthew, he wraps his arms around him immediately. Matthew returns the embrace instantly, taken by surprise. Matthew prompts Will back into the house, never releasing his hold, and kicks the door shut. He strokes Will's hair, which feels damp . He pulls back and looks at Will, completely taking in his condition. He's sweating, Matt can feel his heart beating irregularly against him, and he looks distressed.

"What's going on, babe?" He asks, trying to meet Will's eyes but not succeeding.

"I had a nightmare; sleep paralysis." He mumbles into Matt's chest, gripping his shirt in his fists.

He lifts his head slowly and looks into Matt's eyes,"It was so weird. I've never had nightmares before. It was...scary." Will admits quietly, and Matthew frowns at how vulnerable he sounds.

He pushes his hair from his face gently, and looks at him in concern, "You should eat something, come on."

Will agrees, hoping it will be able to take his mind off of what happened.

-

Will's back is against Matthew's front side, Matt's arm over his waist. Will is holding his hand, fingers loosely laced. He feels safe and comfortable. He drifts into sleep, eased by Matthew's breath on his neck. He is able to sleep without any disturbance for a while. Out of nowhere, he opens his eyes. He is about to turn to face Matt, but he dreadfully realizes he can't move once again. Will wants to cry. He closes his eyes and tries to fall back asleep, but it does no good. When he opens his eyes he wants to scream. There is an unmistakable figure standing near his window, the one from earlier, no longer confined outside of his window. Will tries to tell himself he's imagining things, but then the figure starts moving toward him. Will is able to let out a whimper, it sounds so quiet to him. It sounds like he's surrounded by water, and it's in his ears. The figure is prowling closer and Will does his best to focus on the feeling of Matthew against him. He closes his eyes when the figure is just mere feet away, trying to wish it away distraughtly. He keeps his eyes screwed shut until he thinks that this ordeal has to be over. However, when he cracks his eyes open, the figure is right in front of him. Will can see it tilt its head, and gasps when it suddenly touches his cheek with one of it's claws. It feels unsettlingly real.

"Will?" He hears Matthew's voice, it sounds far away. Will responds with a panicked sound.

The light from his lamp fills the room instantly, and the figure is gone. Matthew's worried face hovers over him. Will tries his best to communicate with just his eyes. Matthew seems to piece together that Will isn't able to move. He shakes him with one hand, trying to help him gain his movement back. Will attempts to alleviate his situation as well, trying to compel his arms and his legs to move. Once he gets his control back, he turns over onto his side to face Matthew. He notices his hands begin to shake, and so does Matthew.

He places a hand on Will's hip and strokes it gently, watching him patiently. Will's mind is racing, but he doesn't know if he can handle talking about this. Matthew lays down at Will's wordless request, opening his arms to him. Will slips into his arms, burrowing himself as far against Matthew as he can. He hopes it will protect him from the lurking darkness, but Matthew won't be there forever.

Three

Chapter Summary

Someone dies, Will and Matthew don't see eye to eye, and Hannibal defends Will.

Will’s nightmares and sleep paralysis never improved. He researched and made a list of everything he could do to prevent this. He tried to not sleep on his back, because that made him more susceptible to paralysis - but he always ended up on his back when he woke up nevertheless. He tried removing the things that caused stress in his life, but the one and only thing that caused him stress that he couldn’t remove was his father. He even tried going to bed at an earlier time. Nothing worked, he still saw the same terrifying figure every night as he was rendered motionless. So he decided to go to the doctor, and demanded medicine - which they gave to him without argument. Probably because he chose to say that his lack of sleep was literally driving him to the brink of insanity, which it was. That warranted a strange look from the doctor, who then began to write the prescription. The doctor had prescribed him Temazepam, which would help him fall asleep and stay asleep.

He walked into the pharmacy a couple hours later with a thrilled zest in his step. He couldn’t wait to get rid of these damned nightmares. He walks to the counter, and the man fiddling with prescription bags turns to face him. He recognizes the man as Matthew’s father. It completely slipped his mind that he worked here.

“Hey, Mr. Brown.” He smiles politely, but the man doesn’t react at all. He dwindles under the man’s impassive look, smile dropping in uncomfortability. The older man just sighs,

“What do you want, boy?” He asks, tone frosty.

Will stumbles over his words for a second, shocked,”Um, I was just here to pick up a prescription for Temazepam.” He explains, as decent as possible - despite the man being fairly impolite to him.

The man turns and promptly walks away. Will watches him go in disorientation. He then turns away from the counter and uselessly studies the rows of medicine, just to get his mind off his boyfriend’s father’s behavior. He makes eye contact with a man in a suit that is standing in one of the aisles, and gives him a quick smile. The sound of the prescription bag hitting the counter startles him and he spins around immediately. He grasps the bag, not making eye contact with the standoffish man in front of him. He is about to say thank you before the man offhandedly says,

“Should I let Matthew know that you’re unstable?” It comes out of left field and it makes Will’s blood run cold.

Will blinks hard, hand tightening around the bag. The man studies him with open disgust, and he drops his eyes and quickly turns around. He brushes past the man from earlier, and all but runs out of the pharmacy.

-

Will lays curled up in his bed all the way from 5pm to 8pm, managing to not fall asleep because of how upset he feels. He gets up and swallows the white tablet dry. He lays down to sleep, still thinking of Matthew's father. He knows he would have been kept up until the late hours of the night without the medicine.

-

The next day flies by. It's almost 6pm when he receives a message from Matthew,

'Hey, can I come over? I need to talk to you'

Will says yes and racks his mind for something Matthew would need to talk about with him. He changes his clothes into something warmer and meets Matthew outside when he pulls up in the driveway. Matthew gets out of his car, face downcast. Will walks over to him and kisses him, noticing the tension flowing from Matthew. Matthew half-heartedly returns the kiss. Will leans back and looks at Matthew and he takes notice of his tear streaked face. Will creases his brow and grips Matt's face,

"Hey, what's wrong?"

Matthew steps back from Will, running his hands over his face with a harsh breath.

"My dad is dead." Matthew admits, voice breaking.

Will's mouth falls open and his eyes widen, words lost momentarily.

"Oh my god, Matt, that's horrible. I'm so sorry." Will says sympathetically, embracing Matthew tightly. It felt unreal to hear that news. Will wasn't fond of Matthew's father, and honestly never was - but now he's dead? Will would be psychotic not to feel even a little bad about it.

Will doesn't know why, but he adds,"I just saw him yesterday, that's unbelievable, Matt, I'm really sorry."

Matthew freezes in his hold and pulls away from Will, taking a step back. He shudders a little and shakily points a finger at Will,

"You saw my dad yesterday? At the pharmacy?" Matthew questions in quick succession and Will nods slowly in return, trying to figure out what exactly is going through Matthew's mind.

“He was murdered yesterday. What time were you at the pharmacy?” He asks, narrowing his eyes at Will.

“I don’t know I-” -”I said what time were you there?!” Matthew raises his voice to cut him off and Will sputters out an answer immediately,

”U-um, maybe at like 7, I don’t know!” Will responds, intimidated and alarmed by the way Matthew was behaving. He had never seen him this way. Ever. Matthew was always soft and kind toward him, but now Matthew is looking at him like he doesn’t know him.

“The officers said the people that were there around closing time were suspects,” He says, and then continues in a hushed voice,“You’re one of those people.” Matthew shook his finger at Will as if he had solved some sort of big mystery and Will realizes what he’s implying.

“Matt, you don’t think - you can’t think that I…” Will couldn’t believe that Matthew was accusing him. Matthew nods irrationally and backs away, walking to his car. His grief had to be making him delirious, there’s no way he believed that Will had done this. Will steps after him quickly and calls out,

“Matt, I had nothing to do with your father’s death, you can’t be serious right now!” He exclaims, trying to get through to him. This was insane. Why would Matthew be so quick to pin this on Will, of all people?

Matthew stops in his place as he opens the car door and shakes his head at Will. He smiles wryly,

“Please, Will, you’ve hated him since you met him.” With that, Matthew gets into the car and pulls out of the driveway at an unsafely high speed.

Will huffs in disbelief, not able to hold back the tears that had formed earlier. He covers his mouth his hand, and stares at the spot where Matthew had stood - accusing him of murder. He stands there until he is able to take in what just happened. The cold is what urges him inside. He walks back inside the house with weak legs. He doesn’t take his pill, just lays there. He drifts to sleep when his crying subsides.

-

Matthew sped down the street, mind racing. All he wanted to do was get to the police. Will had to have done this, he’s the only person that really had a motive, right? He ignored how wrong it sounded - blaming his boyfriend for his father’s death. He ignored how much the signs did not point to Will at all. He didn’t ignore these things on purpose, he wasn’t thinking straight - he was only thinking about his dead father. He ran one hand across his face, the other gripping the steering wheel tightly. When he looked back up, he could barely focus on the road - vision blurry. As he drove on, he saw a figure standing stock still in the middle of the road. Matthew cursed and stopped the car immediately. He jerks forward, and stares at the figure. The figure didn’t move. Matthew furrowed his brows and turned on his high beams to get a better look at the person. The lights unveiled the figure, and it most definitely was not human. Matthew didn’t get to take in the features of the creature before it disappeared in a flash. Matthew breathed out, looking around in shock. He didn’t know why he didn’t drive

immediately, but he wished he had. All of a sudden, his car door is wrenched open and he is dragged from the car. He is slammed against the side of his car brutally. He stares in horror at the creature pinning him. The creature with unnervingly human features and an equally unnerving inhumane voice, growls,

“What exactly were you going to claim to the police, Mr. Brown? That Will killed your father? Will Graham is not a killer.” It feels so bizzare when the creature speaks, and Matthew can do nothing but keep his mouth shut. He presses himself further against the steel, trying to shift away from the creature’s black, hollowed body.

“However, I am. And I took the utmost pleasure in killing him. Did you have the opportunity to see his body after he was killed?” Matthew stares into those haunting white eyes, gaping. Matthew tried to convince himself that this was a nightmare.

“I am assuming that is a no. If you would have taken the time to look at your putrid father’s body, you would have seen the claw marks and the perforation where I ripped out his kidneys. You would have known it was not Will, though it was essentially, by proxy. I can amend the fact that you tried to convince yourself that it was him, I too would love to see him in his prime. Although, I do strongly believe that he should have been the one to kill him, but I will be at peace when I offer him what I ripped from his body.” The creature concludes ominously, gaze burning into Matthew’s face - which he turned away earlier. The creature continues talking, and Matthew detects a hint of amusement - probably from the way he is uncontrollably shaking. The creature clasps Matthew’s shoulder in some mockery of instruction you receive from a teacher or a parent. Matthew knows this can’t be a nightmare, because he feels the claws that puncture his shoulder.

“I don’t know where you will go now, Mr Brown, but it would do you good not to go to the police. Let your father’s death remain blameless, as they will not be able to apprehend me. Or Will.”

As quickly as the creature had appeared, it disappeared with the same speed. Matthew’s knees buckled, and he sunk down onto the concrete, leaning heavily against his car with heavy breaths.

Four

Chapter Summary

> Will gets into some trouble & Will and Hannibal meet, but not under good circumstances.

Will woke up in the morning and fully expected there to be police outside, ready to take him away for something he didn't do. That was how his dreams went last night, no monster - just Matthew, with a row of police backing him up. It was equally as scary as the monster. Will noticed the quiet of the house immediately, not even the sound of his father's snores permeated the house. Will stood and sauntered over to the window, looking out and seeing that his father's truck wasn't in the driveway. There wasn't any police or any Matthew to point a finger at him, either. Will went downstairs and just stood in the middle of the living room. He doesn't know what to do next. The things in his life have been so crazy and it was always one thing after another. Without anything happening, he feels lost.

He has no idea what possesses him to do so, but he walks over to the cabinet that his dad keeps packed with alcohol. He looks over the bottles of liquor, whiskey, and vodka in revolt and thinks of his father. He thinks of the times he just drank and drank and ignored everything else. Will hated that, but somewhere in him - he wanted that feeling. And so, he blindy reaches for a bottle and heedlessly takes a swig of the liquid. It hits him hard with its unfamiliar and bitter taste, burning his throat as he swallows it. He keeps going despite that. In a couple of minutes, he was stumbling around the kitchen - out of control of his body. He felt like a different person, he felt good. He felt like nothing could go wrong.

-

Will woke up slumped on the kitchen table, head pounding. He stood from the chair and placed the half-empty bottle of alcohol in the back of the cabinet, too disoriented to care about what his father might say if he found out. Will looked through the window and saw that it was dark outside. Shocked, he looked at the clock on the wall that read 7:45. Will sighed and trudged up the stairs, having to grip the railing. He doesn't think his hangover is as bad as some he has witnessed from his father - so he's happy about that.

Will opened his bedroom door, stepping inside to the darkness of his room. He tossed his jacket to the side and felt his way to his bed. Will sat on the side of his bed, reaching for the bottle of pills on his nightstand. He uncapped the bottle and reached over to turn on his lamp. Dim light filled the area around him. Will shook out a tablet on his palm, and brought it to his lips. Suddenly, in his peripheral, Will noticed something sitting on his pillow. He dropped his hand with the pill in it and turned his head to see exactly what it was. It took Will a moment

to grasp what it was he was looking at because of the unfamiliarity of it, but he wasn't stupid. He stood up from his bed instantly, gasping. He was snapped from his drunken state immediately. He stood frozen in place, eyes wide. He was looking at organs - kidneys, he thought, if anatomy class had paid off. He waited for someone to jump out of his closet and say that they got him good - but that didn't happen.

Abruptly, Will discerned an anguished yell from outside. It had definitely been his father's voice. Will ran over to his window and apprehensively peeked out of it. Whatever was going on was occuring right under his window. His father was on the ground, looking at someone - but Will couldn't get a good look at who it was. Had someone been trying to break in, and his dad had caught them when he came home? Will let the blind slide back into place, and quickly ran across the hall and into his father's room. He flipped the switch to the light and dropped to his knees beside his father's bed. He leaned down and searched under the bed until he found the shotgun his father kept for hunting. He pulled it out with clammy hands, and then stood up. He went down the stairs with careful, but hasty steps.

Before he opened the front door, he tucked the shotgun between his right shoulder and body. Then he placed his finger on the trigger and his opposite hand gripped the fore-end of the gun. That was one useful thing his dad actually taught him. He braced himself and went outside, clothing inadequate and eyes adjusting to the darkness. He immediately heard his father's grunts and growls that definitely weren't from his father - or any kind of human. Will took a quick look around the door and his grip on the gun wavered at what he saw. There was a dark creature crouched over his dad's struggling body, black claws covering his face. Will put things together almost immediately - this was the thing he had been seeing in his nightmares. But Will wasn't asleep, this was real. This terrifying creature he saw every single night, was real and right in front of him - he could reach out and touch it. That scared Will more than anything.

Had all those situations really been nightmares, or were they real? It dawned on Will that he had been standing there for awhile, and despite his overpowering fear - he took a step outside. Will's jumbled plan was to try and get closer and then capture the monster's attention - then shoot. None of that happened, because once Will moved just a little closer - the monster's head snapped up in his direction. Will was frozen in place as the monster took in his presence with an improperly satisfied look. The creature's hand tightened around his father's face for a moment longer, before the creature released him and stood straight up. His dad gasped in desperate breaths, body spasming from his lack of oxygen. The creature's eyes remained on Will, and Will was aware enough to point the gun at the creature.

"Hello, Will. I had initially come for a visit to assure that you were able to see your gift, until your father here rudely tried to refrain me from doing so." The creature's voice extracts any kind of bravery Will may have had, it shakes him to his core. Will regretfully pieces together that his gift from this creature were the kidneys on his pillow. The creature is moving forward at a leisurely pace, as if not to startle Will any more than he already is.

"I probably should have expected this behavior from him. I did not take into account that he has in fact done this before." Will furrowed his brows, his dad had seen this creature before? He had been acting weird, because of this. And Will blamed it on his drinking. He glanced at his father quickly, remorsefully.

“I should have taken his life the first time he tried to keep my gifts from you.” The creature says and Will knows he needs to do something soon. This creature seems to have a lot of aggression toward his father, and Will can think of how it might convey that. Will’s finger tightens around the trigger and he prepares to shoot the creature. The monster shakes its head in dissatisfaction, but remains where it is indifferently. Will perceives the lightness of the gun in his hand as he works up the courage to shoot the monster. It’s not loaded. Will curses himself in his head, but he thought getting the shotgun would scare away some intruder. He didn’t even think to load it, it was supposed to be a scare tactic. But that all backfires, because this creature doesn’t look anything close to scared. Will’s breathing speeds, as his one weapon becomes impotent. Suddenly, the monster charges toward him and is towering over him in seconds. The gun is seized from his hands and hurled powerfully across the yard. Will stays still and stops breathing with the monster in such close proximity to him. Will turns his head away from the monster, but it grabs his chin with a not so harsh grip, and turns his head back in its direction.

“What are you?” Will’s voice comes out as a whisper, and he avoids meeting the monster’s disturbing white eyes. The creature leans toward him and Will tries to ignore that he hears the monster sniff him.

“To you, I am the monster that you keep. To people like your father and your ‘boyfriend’, I am a threat, an atrocity.” The monster says ‘boyfriend’ in disdain and Will feels a wave of nausea pass over him. Also, Will doesn’t see this monster as anything but a threat and an atrocity, too - so how was he different?

“Keep?” Will questions, with nervous curiosity. He wants to move away, but he knows the monster won’t have that.

“You are what is considered to be a ‘keeper’. In short, I provide for you, I protect you. And you, simply accept that. You have no other responsibilities.” The monster explains, watching Will intently for a reaction.

Will is rendered silent by that, information stirring in his mind but him not being able to fathom it. Will can’t say anything, but no one could blame him because what was he supposed to say in this situation?

“Now, what would you like? Anything you desire.” An impish grin crosses the monster’s face and Will looks into its vacant eyes, completely bewildered.

“Anything I…?” Will trails off, not knowing what the monster is referring to.

“What gift would you like from your inadequate, inebriate of a father here?” The monster elaborates, uninhibited, as if he didn’t just ask what body part he wanted from his father.

Will blinks, watching the monster in dread. This can’t be real. Will closes his eyes, and would have stumbled backward if not for the monster steadying him nimbly. The monster pulls him close and Will flinches at the feeling of claws resting against his waist.

“I can tear out his heart with my bare hands,” The monster accentuates his statement by running his claws over Will’s cheek without animosity, just the threat of it,”And lay it at your

feet, if that is what you want, darling.”

Five

Chapter Summary

> Sorry for the late update, I really need to figure out a set day to post chapters :/ but anyways in this chapter Allen and Wendigo have a dispute, Will and Hannibal talk a little, and Allen comes up with a (bad) idea.

Will fumbles over his words,"What? I don't want any kind of 'gift'!"

Will looks uneasily from the monster to his father, who is still immobile on the ground only feet away from him. As Will observes him, he notices that there is blood staining his white shirt - and it's spreading at an overwhelmingly fast pace. Will tears himself away from the monster, who he doesn't notice is otherwise prominently angry. Will attempts to run to his injured father, but he is quickly intercepted by the monster. Its inky hands circle around Will's bicep and he is shoved firmly against the house. Will gasps, from the shock of the incursion and from the look of pure rage he sees on the monster's face. Will regrets his actions instantly.

"You would sincerely deny my gifts?" The monster snarls at him, cupping his face with an ironically unkind grip. Its claws press against Will's skin, not actually sinking in - but it still sends a ripple of pain through Will. Will shakes his head distinctly from side to side the best he can, even though he would deny the monster's gifts under any other circumstances. However, it's pissed off and Will doesn't want to tempt it into killing him.

"No, I-" He is cut off immediately, the monster apparently not wanting to hear his half-witted excuses,"It is my role to provide you, as I have mentioned. So either you will tell me what you prefer, or I will take what I prefer and that will have to suffice for you." The monster says in a low voice, face very close to Will's. So close that he can practically feel the anger radiating from him. Will turns his head away, pressing it to the cold surface he is pinned against.

He tries to speak as timidly as possible, trying to placate the monster,"I-I will accept your gifts...just not from my father. Please, not from him." Will prays that he gets through the monster, because he knows that if the monster wants something - Will cannot get in his way and stop him.

Will can see the monster giving him a grim look, and Will knows that he can't figure out why Will doesn't want a 'gift' from his father.

The silence between them urges Will to speak,"Anything else." He says, attempting to drive his point further and convince the monster.

Will thinks of his father, how scared he must be, simultaneously bleeding out on the ground from being attacked by some creature and having to hear this conversation. As the thoughts of his father rushed through his head, he notices that the monster also seems to be in thought. He examines Will's turned face for a second and Will withers under his gaze. Will gasps shortly as the monster takes a hold of the curls at the side of his head and twists Will's head to face him neutrally. Will eyes meet the monster's and Will is unawarely curious about his next move. No matter how hard he tries, he can't read the monster. All of sudden, the monster uses his grip on Will's curls to slam his head backwards and against the exterior of the house. Will sways from the impact, mouth falling open. He slumps against the solid form in front of him, the monster catching him immediately. The monster gathers his increasingly limp body, hefts him into its arms, and Will loses consciousness.

-

Will wakes up with an aching head, vision deprived from the darkness surrounding him. Wherever he is is laden with an unfamiliar, unpleasant smell and it's chilly. His back is pressed against what he confirms is wood from the feel of it. He wants to call out, but he doesn't really know what he should say,

"Um, monster?" He asks, feeling stupid as he does so. The door opens on cue and he hears someone step in, floor creaking from the movement. Before the moon can provide some sort of light, the door closes.

"My name is Hannibal." The monster's voice startles him, and Will squints in an attempt to see his shape but it's no use. The monster walks forward a couple of steps, stops, and then moves to stand in front of Will. Will looks up aimlessly until something slippery is suddenly placed into his conveniently open hand. He freezes, not moving,

"What is it?" He questions, apprehensive and wanting to drop whatever is in his hand. He can guess that it's something unpleasant, and the feeling of it is enough to throw him off.

From his voice, Will can sense that the monster is crouched in front of him,"You requested something else, so there it is. Do not let it linger."

Will pieces together that the man is waiting for him to eat whatever is in his hand. Will drops the thing in disgust, feeling nauseous. The monster apparently catches the thing quickly, because Will never hears it hit the ground.

"I am not eating that, if that's what you're expecting." The monster scoffs in response, as if Will is the one being unreasonable. Before he can try to put the thing back in Will's hand, Will pulls both of his hands to his chest protectively.

"I'm not - I can't eat that." Will says again, pressing his back firmly to the wall. The monster doesn't speak, and Will assumes he's giving him a judging look.

"You can't give me that. You can't kill people and take their organs." Will argues, even though he feels as if he's talking to himself.

“I will never stop killing. Bringing you organs is the way I provide for you. How am I meant to do that under the circumstance that you refuse organs?”

“I don’t want organs, I have no purpose for them. Just...maybe you could bring me something else in place of them?” Will proposes, wringing his hands unsurely.

“And what would you suggest I give you instead?” Hannibal prompts, skeptical but curious about Will’s response.

“I don’t know. Maybe something I can collect?” Will is completely talking out of his ass, saying anything just so he doesn’t have to come in contact with any more organs,”Like leaves?” Will cringes at his own suggestion.

“Although I would not prefer to,” The monster pauses minutely,”I will bring you flowers. Will that be more to your liking?” He doesn’t sound pleased at all, but Will is.

Will nods hurriedly, and then jumps to verbally respond,”Yes.”

Will glances around futilely, waiting for something to happen. He then hears the monster swiftly scarf down the organ and he winces. He tries to ignore the metallic smell on the monster’s breath.

“Will you take me home now?” Will asks, the uncomfortability of the situation kicking in. He fully expects the monster to say no for a split second, but he stands up despite that. Will gasps when he gets lifted into unsurprisingly strong arms for the second time that night. Will tenses from being pressed so close to the monster. He doesn’t even realize that they’re out the door and in the forest until he sees trees blur past him. It is a disorientating experience, moving that fast. All of a sudden, Will is standing at his open front door - lightheaded and nearly toppling over. Will turns his head to tell the monster something, not exactly knowing what it is he intends to say. He doesn’t get the chance to however, because the monster is gone and Will is abruptly being tugged across the threshold. He is tugged right against his father’s chest, who shakily wraps his arms around Will. He breathes out in relief, hand stroking the back of Will’s head as he hugs him tight. As they hug, Will notices the shotgun on the table over his father’s shoulder. Bullets are set beside it and it’s loaded now. Will also notices with concern that his father is still steadily bleeding, from the way his blood seeps into Will’s own shirt.

Will finally returns the hug,”What do we do?” He whispers. His father pulls back and sturdily grips his shoulders, looking into his eyes more serious than Will has ever seen him.

“We kill it.”

-

After Will assists his dad with his wound and makes sure he gets into bed safely, he goes to his room. He turns on the light and shuts the door, and stands against it for some time - just trying to process everything. It’s all so surreal. He buries his face in his hands, breathing heavily. He removes his hands and begins to move toward his bed. He just wants to sleep, it’s the only way to get away from all of this. On his pillow, there is a flower with beautiful

purple petals. It has thankfully replaced the kidneys, but the blood has been left behind. The flower over the blood makes an ironic and disturbing picture and Will quickly moves to deface it. He picks up the flower and places it on his nightstand. He stuffs the pillow under his bed to be dealt with later, he can’t stomach looking at it at the moment. He takes a pill for good measure, but he knows it won’t get rid of the nightmares - because they’re happening when he's awake.

Six

Chapter Summary

Short chapter :(

Will's day goes by in a blur, and before he knows it, it's night. He feels like he lost a whole day of sunshine and relaxation because his mind is so set on what his father said. All he can think about is his dad encountering that monster for a third time and it worries him to the point that he can't think about anything else. What if the third time was the last time? He has faith in his father's physical strength and defense of himself and Will, but not so much when it's going against the monster. He wants to beg him to not do this, but in his father's defense - what choice did he have? Will is unknowingly fidgeting when his father enters his room with heavy footfalls. Will fretfully looks over at him, shotgun in hand. Will has no doubt that it is thoroughly armed. He also notices a pistol in his back pocket, and respects the sufficient protection. He comes over to Will and crouches in front of him to catch his eyes, setting his shotgun on the bed. He fishes a pocket clip from his jeans and presents it to Will. Will briefly wonders why he didn't give him the pistol, but then he remembers how he hesitated outside that night. Plus, he probably doesn't want it to escalate to where Will will have to use the gun - so he keeps it to himself. He places the knife into Will's hand and their eyes meet again.

"I pray it don't come to that, but you step in only if it's absolutely necessary, alright?" He says with a pointed glance to the knife. Will nods, eyes downcast, and closes his hand around the knife tightly. His dad patted his hand gently in consolation and placed a hand on his knee as he stood up. He picks up the shotgun and he looks determined and tough and Will is misled into believing that everything would go how they wanted. His dad turns off the lamp on the table and goes into Will's closet to hide until the monster comes, closing the door behind him. Will pulled his covers protectively over his body and laid down, curling into himself. He kept a tight grip on the knife under his pillow. He nearly drifted off, until a noise outside of his window startled him. He cracked one eye open, making sure it would be unseen by the monster if it got close. The image of the monster climbing through his window unsettled him, enough for him to have to resist the urge to call to his father. The monster settled it's inky bare feet on the carpeted floor, and paused. He looked at Will for a second, face unreadable. Suddenly, it tilted it's head impossibly in the direction of the closet and seemed to inhale. Will wanted to scream to his father, the element of surprise was completely lost now if it could sniff his father out. It turned it's head back to Will, and smiled,

"Hello, Will." He said, and Will froze. He opened his eyes slowly in defeat.

"And hello, Mr. Graham." Will was shocked at the turn of events, but he couldn't imagine how his father must have felt. His father emerged from the closet after a couple of seconds, gun raised and pointed directly at the monster's smug face. Will slid out of bed backwards, still gripping his knife in a white knuckled grasp, wanting to be as far from the potential

attack as possible. When he looked at his father facing the monster, his hope crumbled around him. There was no way his father would kill this creature, and Will was definitely out of the question when it came to killing it. He felt inferior enough for both himself and his dad. His dad was glaring right into the monster's vast white eyes, finger steadying on the trigger.

"Dad…" Will said, trying to urge him to just shoot the creature. And he did, he fired a shot and it hit the monster right in the chest. But it didn't bleed, it didn't even move - it just looked back at his father in what Will could only call amusement. While his father was trying to make sense of what just happened, the monster lunged at him. He swiped his sharp claws across his father's unprotected face, drops of blood splattering on to the floor. His father flew back and against the closet door, slumping. The monster didn't linger and turned it's intense gaze to Will with a swift turn of his neck. Will backs himself up against the wall, holding the knife out in front of him shakily, weakly. The monster is in front of him in an instant and he is pinned to the wall for his effort, or lack thereof. The knife drops from Will's pinned hand with little to no prompting and he curses himself. The monster looks at him and takes a hold of his wrist, bringing his hand up between them. It turns Will's hand over so his palm is facing up, running a clawed finger over it. It then places a flower on his hand. It wraps it's inky hand around Will's own and closes his fingers around the flower, leaning close to Will's ear to whisper,"You will not deny me forever."

His lips linger at Will's ear for a tense second, before it pulls away and releases Will's hand.

"Now, we have one more thing to take care of before I go." Will looks at him indirectly, eyes teeming with confusion. The monster casts an impassive look to his father and Will becomes fearful. The monster looks at him, noticing his fear and addressing it,"I will not kill him, but he can not keep getting in my way when it concerns you. It is best if he forgets what has happened the past couple of days." Will's eyes widened.

"How?" Will asks in a feeble voice.

"The most efficient way would be to cause head trauma." It continues before Will can react,"Only minor, I assure you." As if that made things any better. Will drops the flower and shakes his head back and forth frantically.

"What? No." He says in disbelief, and this whole thing feels unreal.

The monster sighs at him and steps close to him again, looking at him unrelentingly until Will looks back at it reluctantly,"If it does not happen, I will kill him." It says, blunt and absolute. Will's breathing speeds and tears spring to his eyes. He doesn't want his dad to die, but him forgetting all about what has happened makes him afraid. He would be alone. He stands in silence, although there isn't much to think about. He won't let his dad die, no matter how much he hates the idea of him losing his memory. The monster allows him all the time he needs, simply watching him in silence. Finally, Will looks back at the monster and can tell that it knows how Will will respond before he actually does respond. Will nods jerkily, which is all he can do at the moment. He looks down at the floor, a single tear gliding down his cheek. The monster cups his face without hesitation, swiping the tear away. Will doesn't have the energy to recoil although his mind screams at him to do so. It takes him by the arm and he willingly lets the monster lead him to his bed. He lays down, and tries to ignore the fact that

the monster pulls the cover over him. He just closes his eyes, wanting to get away from here. He hears no sound at all before he falls asleep.

Seven

Chapter Summary

> So so so sorry for abandoning this fic :(but here's a new chapter! Not sure how I feel about it but I wanted to get something out to you guys!

Will presses the cold rag against his cheeks that are chaffed from a night of crying. He drags it over his eyes which are irritated from his lack of sleep. He looks at himself in the mirror and tunes in to the sound of the television going downstairs. He doesn't know if he's ready to face his father yet, doesn't know if he'll ever be ready to. He looks away from his own teary eyes and hopes the monster didn't go through with what he said. Maybe it didn't work. Will knows in the back of his mind that the monster would have been sure that it did work. He drops the rag into the sink, and braces himself. He turns the knob with a shaky and feels a second of relief at the cold air on his face.

He grips the railing of the stairs, not entirely trusting his legs to hold him up. He makes it to the bottom of the stairs and catches sight of his father. He's sitting on the couch, eyes trained on the television across the room. Will bumps his hand against the wall purposefully to catch his attention. His dad turns his head towards him impassively and looks at him shortly before turning away,

"Stop lurking, boy."

Will blinks in confusion at the back of his father's head. He stands there for a second, thinking. His dad recognized him, but was acting like nothing at all happened. He looks at the floor and walks into the kitchen. He gets a cup and pours some water in it to distract himself. As he takes his first sip, he hears his father's heavy footsteps enter the kitchen.

"You know what happened to my face?" Will has the chance to study the scar the monster left on his father's face last night, but can't look at it for long. He takes a second sip under his father's demanding gaze and thinks of a lie.

"We were out hunting a couple days ago and you got attacked." He doesn't add anything else to the statement to make it any more believable, just avoids his dad's eyes. He hopes he doesn't ask anymore questions.

His dad continues with a slight scowl,"Did we kill it?"

"No, it-it got away."

His dad crosses his arms,"How come it got me and not you?" He says it in such a way as if he believes it really should have been Will that got attacked.

Will grips his cup a little tighter as rage simmers in his chest,"Maybe you provoked it." He is surprised at the temper in his voice as he glares at his dad.

It seems his dad is, too. He comes storming forward and swings his hand out in Will's direction. Will fully expects the hand to connect with his face, but it only knocks the cup from his hand. As the cup crashes to the floor and water spills from it, Will is momentarily brought back to all the times his dad has been like this. The times that had made him retreat to Matt's house. Will is snapped from those thoughts as his dad gets close to his face, primed to yell at him. He doesn't get to, however, because his dad's hand flies to his own head and he steps back with a pained look. He gives Will a glare and then storms from the kitchen and stomps up the stairs.

-

Allen collapses on his bed and rests his pounding head on his cold pillow. He lays there for a while, trying to alleviate the pain. When nothing happens, he reaches over to his bedside table and fishes through it for pain pills. He finds no pain pills, but he does find a leather book with an ink pen tucked between the pages. He sits up and opens it to the first page which has "provided by Dr. Bloom" scribbled in handwriting that definitely does not belong to him. He finds the pages the pen is between and reads the words written down on the pages. This handwriting does belong to him. He skims through the individually dated paragraphs.

{ Something is after me and Will. I think it wants to kill us, hurt us. I can't be sure if it was real or if I was just seeing things, but it ain't normal. It felt real and people don't just see things like that }

{ Josh Brown died today. They said he had claw marks on him and organs missing. I think this monster could have been behind it }

{ The first time I saw it, I thought I was hallucinating. But then I saw it again. It attacked me. It took Will away. I don't think it wants to hurt him. I was more prepared this time, I brought a camera with me so that I could know that it was real }

Allen dropped the book in shock, the pain in his head now his very last problem. He had written these? Something was very wrong. He thought of the last sentence he saw on the page. A picture. He looked through his drawers again and discovered a camera fairly fast. He turned it on and clicked through the pictures it held. Pictures of fish, hunted animals, and landscapes blurred by. The last picture however was another thing completely. It was a fairly blurry picture but when Allen studied it closer, he saw a tall, inky creature with antlers facing away from the camera. He recognized Will's head of curls and shoes hanging down as he was apparently swept away by the creature. He set the camera down, taking a step back. His mind raced and looked for explanations. He glanced into the mirror on the wall, and examined the scar on his face. He got attacked for sure, but not while hunting and not by any normal creature. His most prominent thought as he stood there was - Will.

-

Will rouses slowly when light from outside his room washes over his face. He opens his eyes up and props himself up on his elbows. He sees the still figure of his father illuminated by

light, arms placed behind his back.

“Dad?” He asks, voice hoarse. His dad moves closer and looks down at him, jaw clenched..

“I don’t know what you did to bring that creature here, boy, but you made a mistake.” He said, voice hard. He moves his head down and looks at Will closely.

“You remember?” Will asks, completely awake now and shocked.

“Did you bring it here to kill me? It killed Brown, was I meant to be next?” His dad spat at him, and Will shifted back a little.

“What?” Will whispered, looking into his dad’s eyes. It was the same look Matthew had when he blamed Will for his father’s death. His father’s eyes showed something more deranged, though.

His dad growled and in one quick movement he had his shotgun aimed at Will.

Will’s eyes widened and he scrambled off the bed,”Dad!” He cried in disbelief, breath speeding as he cowered behind his bed.

“You sent that monster after me and you’re going to pay for it, you hear me?”

Eight

Chapter Summary

Warning for attempted sexual assault in this chapter! Nothing explicit happens, though.

Will was huddled behind his bed, head down and body quivering. He heard his father growl and his heavy footsteps slammed against the carpeted floor as he made his way over to Will. Will lifted his teary eyes and looked around him in a panic. Through his blurred vision and racing mind, he sought out the lamp on his bedside table. It would take too long to reach up and grab it, he concluded in anguish. He scrambled back, his back pressed firmly into his table as his dad came to stand in front of him. His face was hard and the gun was aimed at Will once again. Will did his best to avoid looking at the barrel of the gun, instead finding his dad's eyes. A tear rolled down his face as he put his hands up to placate his dad, pulling his legs into himself. Despite Will's pleading eyes, his dad's finger found the trigger.

"Dad-" In a quick flash, a black figure arrived behind his dad. The tall creature loomed over his father, and it's hands caged his head firmly. A look of panic crossed his dad's face before a crack reverberated through Will's bedroom. His dad and his gun went crashing to the floor. Will let out a noise of shock, the scream that was present stuck in his throat. Will fell forward, a new wave of tears dripping from his eyes and onto the carpet beneath him as he crawled to his father. Will brought a shaky hand up to touch his father's chest. He had regretfully assumed his fate, but the stillness under his hand broke him completely. Will sobbed, the arm supporting him giving out. He collapsed on to the carpet and came face to face with his lifeless father. Not breathing, pupils dilated, skin scarily pale.

The scream did come this time, muffled by the carpet as Will turned away from the sight. He didn't hear the creature's movement, but it's hands touched his body. Hands that killed his father. Will used the little bit of strength he had left to struggle against the creature. It was persistent though, pulling him up until he stood on his numb legs. The creature moved him to his bed, where he fell prone. The creature said something, but Will didn't hear it - his head felt submerged under water. None of this felt real. He pushed himself up with trembling arms and reached under his bed for shoes. He put them on quickly. He didn't look at his father and ran out of his room. He heard the sound of running water as he sprinted down the hall on unsteady legs. Things began to feel real as soon as he made it outside, chilly air hitting his skin and drying his tears when they returned.

-

Will walked down the road, eyes shifting back and forth repeatedly as he dreadfully looked out for the creature who probably already knew he was gone. As he walked on, he saw faint lights and heard the sound of a distant car. It dawned on him how bad this idea was, anything could happen to him out here. But would it really be worse than what had already happened?

He kept his head bowed and hoped he would blend in with the darkness of the night. Instead, the gravel crunched slowly as the car came to a stop not too far from him.

He was prepared to run, but a window rolled down and he heard a voice call to him, "Hey, I know you."

Will turned around and saw Beverly Katz leaning out of the window peering at him. He nodded and dwindled under the gazes of her and her boyfriend.

Beverly looked him up and down,"Heading to Zeller's party?" She asked, despite his clothing choices. Will cringed at the name of the arrogant and loud boy and shook his head. She looked at him for awhile as he awkwardly rubbed his arm.

"Well, do you want to come? You look like you could use some partying." She finally said, smiling.

Will was about to deny, but a rustle came from the trees behind him. He jumped in response and Beverly watched him with furrowed brows. Will jerkily nodded at her.

"Great. Get in."

He knew he was in no state to go to a party, but he got in the car anyways.

-

Will was exhausted when they pulled into Zeller's driveway. He roused a bit when Beverly laughed and shifted in her seat,

"That neighbor looks ready to call the cops on us already." Will looked out the window with heavy eyes and saw a man standing stiffly in the opposing yard, dressed in a three piece suit. Will turned away, pressing his head back to the cold window as they parked. Beverly and her boyfriend hopped out the car, Will getting out with much less enthusiasm. Will's attire compared to everyone else's wasn't too far off - everyone looked pretty casual so he hoped he wouldn't stand out in his sweatpants and t-shirt. Will trailed silently behind Beverly and her boyfriend as they entered the house. Zeller stood at the door to welcome people inside.

He saw them,"Bev, Zac! And Graham..." Zeller said, blinking at him. He eventually shrugged it off,"Guess everyone could use a party before school starts back up."

Zeller went back to talking to Beverly and Zac and Will zoned out. School was already about to start back up? He hadn't even realized. His thoughts then began to trail back to his father. He shakily breathed out and tried to direct his attention back to the conversation they were having beside him. Beverly turned to him and he attempted to look normal,

"We're gonna go get a drink, come if you want." Beverly offered, to which Will shook his head. He felt nauseous and wanted to sit down.

-

Minutes later, Will's nausea had subsided but the invasive thoughts of his father had returned. He stood up from the comfy couch and found his way to the punch bowl. He knew there would be alcohol in it, he expected nothing less from Zeller. He poured himself a cup, full to the brim. He went back to his designated spot on the couch and gulped down the beverage swiftly. He went back and forth from the bowl to the couch more times than he could count, alcohol taking over him after awhile. He was stumbling back to the kitchen when someone caught his arm. It was Beverly.

"Hey, Will - are you drunk?" She ducked her head to get a good look at him. He didn't respond, swaying gently in her hold. She set her cup down and moved both hands to his shoulders.

"Do you need to lay down? Brian has a guest room upstairs if you need it." Will nodded hazily and blinked in confusion when someone else approached him and Beverly.

"I'll show him, I'm heading that way anyways." It was a guy Will didn't recognize. Beverly nodded her thanks, giving Will one last look before releasing him.

The unknown guy motioned for Will to follow him and Will didn't think anything of it as he stumbled after him. He helped Will up the steps with a hand on his arm. He took Will to the guest bedroom and Will parted from him to go lay down on the disheveled bed. Will heard the door click shut and he let his eyes close. They opened back up instantly when he felt a shift on the bed at his feet. He weakly lifted his head and saw the guy climbing on to the bed. Will looked at him through cloudy eyes. moaning in protest as the guy's hands stroked his legs. Will attempted to move away, but he couldn't do much with the amount of alcohol in his system.

As the guy straddled his thighs, a crash sounded through the room. Will saw the boy look over, before he was heaved off of Will's body. He hit the ground with a groan. A quick gush of air and a blur of black passed over his limp body. Panicking at the sight of what he knew was the creature, he rolled himself over. He moved too fast, however, because his head instantly began to pound. He reeled on the bed until hands grabbed him and he was lifted into strong arms.

Nine

Chapter Summary

<3

Will is jerked unceremoniously from his sleep, prompted to do so by the throbbing pain in his head. He cringes away from the blinding light streaming across his face, and buries the side of his face into the pillow behind him. He lays there with closed eyes until his headache gets a little more tolerable. Will opens his eyes, and it takes him a prolonged amount of time to recognize where he is. He wishes he hadn't, because when he does - multiple memories hit him at once. Beverly, Zeller's party, him getting drunk, the guy, the monster. His father was dead. He pushes himself up and his eyes fall upon the now bare place where he watched his father die. He gets taken back to the moment, his father's lifeless face overshadowing his other thoughts.

He grounds himself quickly, shaking the image from his head. He instead put all his focus on how extremely thirsty he was. He stands up from his bed, getting dizzy immediately. He reaches out for something to brace himself on, finding his nightstand. In doing that, he almost knocks over the convenient glass of water on it. Will snatches it up quickly, collapsing back on to the edge of his bed to gulp it down. It may have slightly helped his hangover, but his nerves - not so much. His situation settles heavily on him. Will's father was killed in this house, and he magically disappeared from Zeller's house - probably leaving a gruesome scene in his wake. There were probably still people who believed he had something to do with Mr. Brown's death. The cops were going to come for him. And if he tried to claim there was some antlered monster after him, they would lock him up in the closest mental institution.

The doorbell rings from downstairs.

-

Will freezes in his spot, gripping the glass tight in his hand so he doesn't drop it. He thinks - hopes - that he imagined the sound. But it happens again, one ring after the other in quick succession. It crosses his mind to just ignore it, but whoever is there is persistent. He puts down his water shakily and stands. He pulls open his bedroom door as slowly and quietly as possible. As he pads down the stairs, he tries to convince himself that it could be Beverly. Or Matthew - but that definitely wouldn't go well. He goes to the peephole silently and looks out discreetly. Will's heart nearly stops when he sees two men in uniform, badges gleaming under the sun. He stumbles back, breathing speeding up. He unwisely considers running out the back door, but knows he would look guilty.

Another ring and a loud knock pulls him out of his turmoil. Will wraps his suddenly clammy hand around the door knob and carefully unlocks the door. The leading officer looks irked at first, but once his eyes settle on Will - he schools his expression into one more professional. Will immediately feels uncomfortable under the men's gazes, keeping his eyes low on their polished shoes. Will truly expects them to present him with gory pictures from a crime scene they discovered at Zeller's house. They don't.

The officer in the back instead fishes out a white piece of paper from his pocket as the one in front speaks, leaning against the doorframe,

"Your father, Allen Graham, was reported missing. You're still a minor. Who are you here with?" The officer inquires.

Will's brows furrow, eyes traveling frantically around but avoiding the officer's eyes. He doesn't want to encounter orbs filled with accusation for the third time.

"Reported missing? By who?" The officer crosses his strong arms and presses his thin lips together. He looks Will over before looking back at the officer behind him. The other officer takes his look as a cue to begin reading from the piece of paper in his hand.

"Lady named Alana Bloom, local therapist down at Essential Grace. She says in the report that he hadn't showed up to his appointments for days. She called his workplace and home, and got no sign of him. She asked that we look into this as soon as possible due to his health issues." The officer explains, flicking his eyes from Will and to the other officer who repeats firmly,

"Who are you here with?"

Will doesn't even have time to process the newly revealed information that his father had a therapist, as the officer burns holes into him with eyes. He attempts to formulate a response but he can't, and his chest tightens painfully. He wants to run, but he wants to offer his wrists the officer just as much. Due to his silence, the officer in front straightens his formerly leaned body, fixing Will with a hard look.

"I am here." A voice chimes from behind Will. He pales instantly. He can hear the footfalls of someone coming toward him and the officers from the other side of the room. There's someone else in the house. Will holds his breath as he turns jerkily. A man is stalking toward the door, neatly slicked hair, tan skin, and a three piece suit sheathing his built frame. Will freezes and his blood runs cold when he recognizes this man - from the pharmacy, from the house across from Zeller's. The man moves closer, eyes tracking Will and then both the officers behind him.

A hand is placed on his bicep, and he blinks at the taller man - eyes teeming with fear and confusion. Once he looks at his face, it dawns on him. The cheekbones, the nose, the mouth - this man was the monster he had been seeing for weeks. As Will gasps at the realization, he is gently steered out of the way. Will inches away sluggishly, pressing his back firmly against the wall.

Will watches with bleary vision as the man offers a large hand to the officers, introducing himself as Hannibal Lecter.

“I am assuming you are here in regards to Allen.” He says, politely.

“That would be correct, sir.” The officer responds.

“Of course. Will told me days ago he thought something was off when Allen had not returned from work one night. I came to him as soon as possible to attempt to wait it out, but he has not returned.”

“Any idea where he could be?”

The man pretends to think for awhile, “Nothing comes to mind.”

“Mind if I ask what you are to the boy?”

“Not at all, I am a family friend of the Grahams. Would it do anything to put you gentlemen at ease if I said I have already spoke to the officials about custody matters?”

Custody matters? Will swallows hard at that.

“Yeah, yeah, we just had to check up on him since he’s a minor. But, we won’t keep you any longer. We’ll be sure to keep you updated. These types of cases are usually resolved after one or two days so we’ll reach out and let you know what we have at that point.” The officer concludes, passing the man a notepad. He jots something down quickly and passes the pad back with a grin.

“Have a nice day, officers.”

Then, the door clicks shut.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!